

Hillandale

News

No 191 April 1993





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Tuesday 11 May 1993

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Hillandale News

The Official Journal of The
and Gramophone



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Society

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Editor: Chris Hamilton, [redacted] Cupar, Fife KY15 4EP

Secretary: Suzanne Lewis, [redacted] Chesham, Bucks HP5 3JB

Treasurer: Chris Hamilton, [redacted] Cupar, Fife KY15 4EP

Tel: [redacted]

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Issue Number 191, April 1993

Contents

- 194 **Editor's Desk**
- 195 **My E.M.G. Dream Machine** by L. Miles Mallinson
- 202 **Pabst's *Don Quichotte*** by William Shaman
- 205 **Waxing Lyrical** by George Frow
- 208 **A Collector's Diary** by Stephen Gadd
- 210 **Theodore Edison - Obituary**
- 211 **Conversations with Mr Edison** by Ronald Dethlefsen
- 214 **Edison's Death Mask** by George Frow
- 215 **Bringing Early Sound Recordings to Life** by Tony Freeman
- 217 **Letters**
- 220 **Reports of Meetings**
- 222 **Reviews**
- 226 **The Phonograph**
- 227 **Forthcoming London Meetings**
- 228 **Advertisements**

Front cover illustration: Miles Mallinson and his newly restored E.M.G. Mark X at last year's Phonofair at Northampton. See Miles' article on page 195.
(Picture by courtesy of member A. J. George)

EDITOR'S DESK



Changes

With this issue a new subscription year starts for the Society. It also marks a change for *Hillandale News*. The April 1988 issue heralded a change to A5 page size, a revamp of the interior of the journal and a new cover. This gave a more professional appearance and layout to the magazine. It is now time to make further changes and from this issue onwards we have a new style front cover. The number of pages has been increased to 40 for this issue. Should the need occur we now have the flexibility to provide 40 pages for future issues. In order to accommodate this increase in size we have had to drop the glossy surface art paper and use a matt surface paper. This is a lighter weight paper and we can have our increased number of pages without suffering any penalty in increased postal charges.

I would ask our readers to help us to maintain these improvements by contributing articles to *Hillandale News*. The success of this magazine depends, to a large degree, on such members putting pen to paper and sharing their particular interests with others. I would like to remind those who have access to computers that I am able to receive copy on both 3.5" discs (720 Mb and 1.4Mb) and 5.25" discs (360 Mb and 1.2Mb). Text can be in 1st Word Plus (.doc), ASCII (.txt), DCA/RFT (.rft), MS Works (.wps), Rich Text Format (.rtf), Windows Write (.wri), Word for DOS (.doc), Word for Windows (.doc), WordPerfect 4 (.doc), WordPerfect 5 (.doc), WordStar (.doc). For those who wish to submit copy in typewritten text may I ask that they use double spacing between lines. This would help me to scan in the text without re-typing everything into the computer.

I hope these changes will make *Hillandale News* a more attractive, informative and easy to read magazine. If you have any comments or suggestions for further improvements I would be delighted to hear from you. Meanwhile I repeat my appeal for more contributions for publication and I wish you all enjoyable and happy reading for the new subscription year.

Please note that material intended for inclusion in *Hillandale News* must reach the Editor not later than **six weeks before the first day of the month of issue.**

Hence the deadline for the **June** issue will be **15th April 1993.**

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Views expressed in this magazine do not necessarily reflect those of the Editor.

MY E.M.G. DREAM MACHINE

by L. Miles Mallinson

On Sunday 29th September 1991, my wife Ann and I decided to go to an "Antiques Fair" held at Lancaster University, one of a series of fairs held every three months or so. On arrival we realised that there was not the usual number of stalls, and in fact those stalls which were there had nothing of interest for either of us and considering the time and effort in getting there, we weren't too happy!

"How about going to G.B. Antiques?" was the first remark I heard on coming out of the University. Ann had heard that the old Hornsey Pottery factory, which had been closed now for quite some time, had been turned into a huge Antiques Centre. We decided to give it a try, but I had already considered that the chances of finding anything interesting at such a place was remote to say the least.

We paid our 50ps and went in. The main room is quite huge and is broken up into small areas with individual permanent stalls. Moving quickly through the stalls, I spotted what was unmistakably the base of an E.M.G. Model X. It was absolutely filthy and the case was heavily scarred. There was no winding handle in the hole, and as there was no one on the stall I tried the lid, but it was locked. "Perhaps it is only an empty box?" I thought, and at the price of £85 on the attached label, that was a possibility.

Just then the stall holder arrived and asked if we were interested in it. He produced a key and opened the lid. There was the handle, and what was more everything seemed to be there; although the motor

board screws had been removed and were lying on the top of the board I tried the motor, but as it did not run, I asked him if I could wind it up. The handle just went round and round. Was the spring unhooked or broken, or was there no motor? I lifted the motor board to find that it was there, even though the governor springs were damaged. I bought it and then found out for the first time just how heavy E.M.G.s are!

I couldn't believe that I, Me, Myself, had just bought an E.M.G., that machine which is not available to the likes of me. That machine which sells at enormous prices way beyond my meagre means. "Is it a dream or have I really got it?" Then grave doubts about my purchase started to niggle. "What about a HORN? Maybe they are impossible to find?" "Those great big papier-mâché horns are so at risk from damage through damp and from mechanical means, that there must be many more bases around than there are horns to go with them." "Really, what chance have I of finding one of these horns which not only is complete, but has no base to go with it?"

By the time we had arrived back in Barrow-in-Furness, I was convinced that there was no horn in the world which would be available, and even if there was, it would be so expensive that I would not be able to purchase it, and then that Dream would have to go to some rich investor.

On arriving home Ann made some tea, and I telephoned my old friend in Belfast, Alan Granleese, as a possible starting point in my search for the missing horn. "I say Alan, do you happen to know where I can

put my finger on an E.M.G. horn?" "Oh yes, Harry has one", came the casual reply, "But it is in a bit of a state!!"

I rang Harry who said he would consider selling it, and we negotiated a price (which included some musical box repairs), and a date and meeting was arranged in Stranraer, where I could collect it from the ferry.

That evening after over 400 miles of driving on narrow busy roads, I arrived home with that HORN. I unwrapped it. It was in a real mess!! "What on earth have you got there?" Ann whispered. "Oh I shall soon put this right" I lied. What a challenge!! Although I have an engineering background, and a good grounding in woodwork, I have never dealt with papier mâché, and especially when the shape has to be so accurately developed into its original form if it is ever going to work properly.

I decided to get the bottom half of the machine right first and to think of the best ways of tackling the horn later.

There are many variations of motor fitted to these machines; in this case it is a G.C.R. - Model 225, made in Switzerland. It is a two-spring motor beautifully made and finished in nickel plate. I washed it down in paraffin and dismantled it. The governor springs were damaged and required replacement. On opening the spring drums, one spring had the reverse bend near its centre, a sure tell-tale that the other one is broken. I was right! Right at the centre, the hole had pulled out. This was good news, as I could repair it without too much difficulty. The damaged spring was removed from its drum, with the respect it deserves. Springs can be dangerous to your health if handled wrongly! After removal it was washed in paraffin to remove



G.C.R. Model 225 Swiss made motor

the filthy black grease which covered it. With a pair of pliers I pulled out the spring centre until it looked like a cone, and wedged it in that shape with a piece of steel sheet. The rest of the spring was covered with a sheet of insulating material with only the offending centre protruding. This was heated to a dull red to soften the spring, using a blowlamp. After cooling, the end was first straightened out and then marked out for the hole, before drilling and filing it to a near pear shape. The outer edge was cut to shape and dressed with a file and finally put back into shape. The spring could now go back in its drum.

The governor springs having been replaced, the motor could now be re-assembled and tried. What a beauty. It ran so quietly and wound so silkily. It was allowed to run down completely and the spring drums opened up again to part fill them with grease. The motor was now as good as new and was ready for use.

The arm was next dealt with: it is held into the machine by a threaded sleeve which screws into the sound conduit below the motor board and is prevented from unscrewing by a single woodscrew in its bottom flange. On removal it was obvious that the arm bearing had a serious fault, as it moved with difficulty and roughness. The bearing cap was unscrewed to reveal a ball cone system with the inner race being integral with the arm casting, this being nickelled brass. The cone had been damaged beyond repair by someone assembling it wrongly at some time, and then forcing it to be moved until the cone surface was distorted and the plating broken up. I removed it by sawing it off the arm and dressing the surface up with a file until it registered true to a micrometer. A new bearing cone was now turned on my lathe and made a press fit over the back of the arm. The outer cones were also damaged and were cut on the lathe, new ones being machined to suit and fitted. The arm

bearing was now assembled using new balls and adjusted until the slack was just removed, but without introducing and preload. The bearing adjustment lock screw was now tightened and the arm checked for free movement. The swan-neck swivel was washed out, oiled and re-assembled.

The soundbox was carefully dismantled and inspected. Other than the aluminium diaphragm being bent, and the gasket rubbers being perished, it appeared to be in good condition. The diaphragm was very carefully straightened using the back of my fingernail to rub it flat, whilst the diaphragm was resting on a flat surface plate. The gasket rubbers were a little more of a problem as they are larger than those normally available. They are also extremely soft. I eventually found something which would operate perfectly at our local hospital, through the help of a pathologist friend.

The knife edges were inspected for wear but seemed all right. All the screws used in the assembly of an E.M.G. soundbox are fitted with little red rubber washers to prevent them from shaking loose during use. This is necessary as the setting or tuning of these heads requires that the screws are not pulled right down tight as on most makes of soundboxes. I have found that the setting of gasket screws requires just enough "nip" to prevent vibration at the diaphragm edge and no more. The four screws at the bottom hold the stylus arm. The end ones retain the arm on the knife edges and need to do so without due load or freedom. The other two control the cross-tension and need to be pulled down equally so as not to strain the diaphragm at rest.

The soundbox weighs eight ounces and I carried out a lot of tests on it when the machine was completed regards tuning, quality of sound and needle wear, and found that using a counter-weight to reduce the effective weight to six ounces gave me

the best results when using the triangular bamboo needles required by this sound-box.

The case on this machine is a beautiful rich mahogany with quartered panels on the sides, but with straight grain on the top of the lid and a cross banding of the same wood 1¼ inch wide round the edge. All the edges are finished with a 3/16 inch ebony binding. This particular case is unusual in that it has a continuous moulding running round the base, and is the only E.M.G. which I have seen which has the lid lock set into the lid itself rather than the base, having the advantage that the key can be used as a lifting handle when opening the lid, thus preventing finger marks on the french polish.

The case was in a dirty and scratched condition but otherwise was very good. I used a furniture cleaner to remove the grime from the surface of the polish. The french polish was in reasonable condition except for a large number of deep scratches and scars on the finish which luckily didn't go through the veneers. I applied french polish into the scars by means of an artist's brush, building it up until slightly proud. At this stage I gave it a few days to harden and then using a handkerchief moistened with a little methylated spirit, I rubbed the case over until the scars and scratches disappeared. This wonderful effect doesn't happen immediately but takes several hours, with several stops overnight to allow for the finish to harden. The final result is a pleasing one, keeping the original colour of the wood, and does not look like a new cabinet.

Now for the HORN! Before attempting to destroy the old horn I recorded as much information from it as I could, including the photographs. I measured the internal diameters from their positions along its length, adding the diameters inside the arm and conduit I was able to plot the curve and

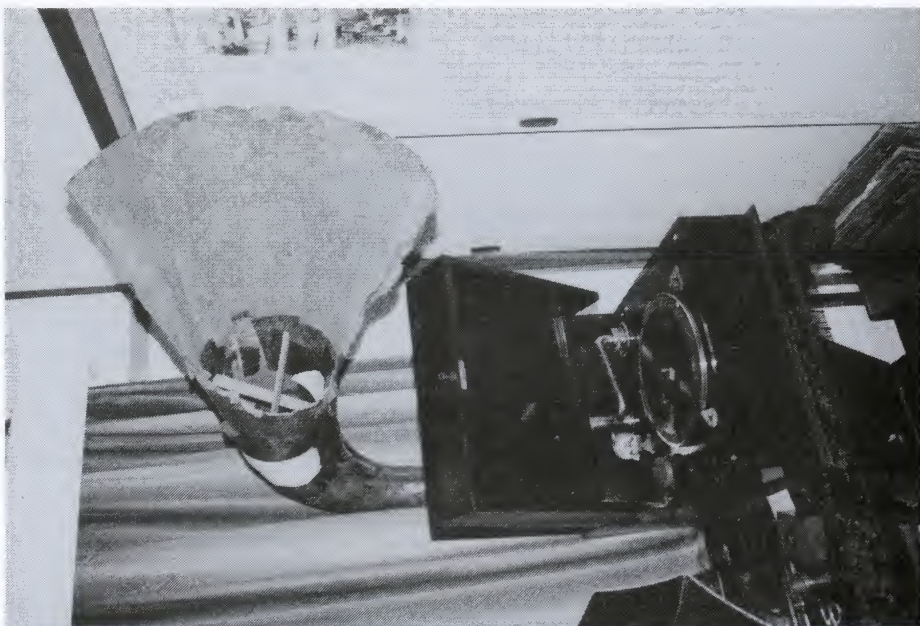
attempt to regain the "Modified exponential curve" of the original horn which gave these machines their marvellous performance. I have a copy of *Modern Gramophones and Electrical Reproducers*, by Wilson and Webb, published in 1929, which I found extremely useful at this stage.

From the calculations the horn profile was finalised and a former was made from ¾ inch plywood rings set for each 2 - inch increase on the diameter. Notches were cut for the 18 stringers, and the frame built up. This was skinned with 1/16 inch plywood, glued and stapled into place. When the glue was dry the staples were removed and the wood sanded, grainfilled, varnished and wax polished to prevent the horn from sticking to it.

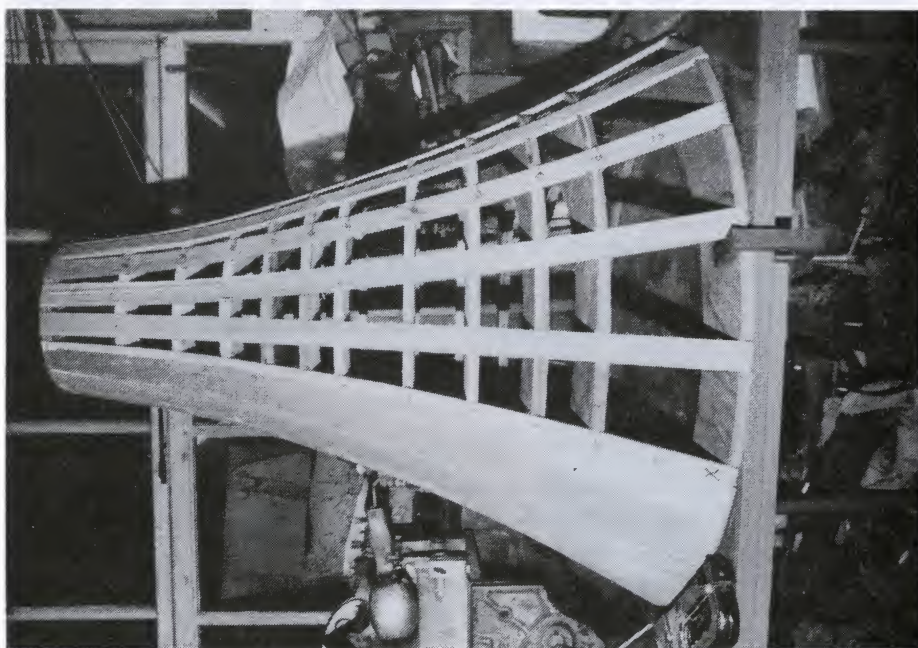
Unwanted bits of the old horn were cut away, leaving only the stem and part of the right side of the flare. Even here there was considerable repair work carried out. Remember that these horns were made of paper glued together with animal glue. Much of the damage had occurred due to damp which had penetrated into the material. Wherever this had happened new material had to replace the old.

Now for the myths about the materials used in these horns! This horn was made of blue "Sugar paper", similar to that from which sugar bags were made but not from old sugar bags themselves as is sometimes heard. Some of them were made from old "London Telephone Directories".

The remains of the horn were placed face down over the mould and layers of "Cumbria Telephone Directories" piece by piece were glued over the mould. To prevent further possibilities from damage through damp I decided to use resin glue. Sugar paper was available but as it is only available locally as a mounting paper for artists, it was far too expensive. After THREE directories had disappeared[[eared into the horn and still more paper was



Partially-restored horn and fully-restored cabinet and turntable



Tailor-made former for the horn

needed, I used old engineering drawings on cartridge paper to finish off the construction.

Giving it two or three days to fully harden I brought it from my workshop into the house, having successfully lifted it from the mould, and fitted it to the machine to try. Would it sound right, would it support itself without collapsing down over the cabinet as had been seen on occasions by the owners of these machines?

It passed on both counts with unbelievable sounds floating effortlessly from that horn, and with the lid closed almost no surface noise was apparent. The sound image appears to be in front of the horn as a real presence in the listening room.

My diary tells me that that event took place on the 12th December just over ten weeks since I had first encountered that tatty old E.M.G. box at Lancaster. I now had to set to to make the finishing paper for the inside of the horn. I had plenty of the original paper to copy off. It was a black zig-zag pattern on a yellow paper which appeared to have been stained brown and finished with a coat of shellac. I copied the design onto a piece of white paper as carefully as I could using a thick fibre tipped pen. This was then photostatted onto thirty sheets of yellow paper.

Dark oak stain was applied to it before it was glued to the inside surfaces of the horn using a waterproof "Bathroom" paste and cutting the paper into small pieces to prevent wrinkles forming. Papering began right down inside the throat, continuing to the rim, turning the paper over the edge to give it a finish.

The outside paper had been of "snakeskin"

texture with tiny bobbles on its surface. "Where oh where am I going to get this paper?" I puzzled. I tried many sources but all to no avail. Some had sounded so promising and caused much delay in actually starting on the problem. To get the paper texture I made a ball ended punch which was used to make the appropriate texture in a sheet of tinplate. Seven and hundred and fifty punches to the square inch! It took me two and a half days of solid work to produce the tinplate mould. A plain lining paper was now wetted with a dark oak spirit stain and applied wet to the mould being rolled into the tinplate texture using a little rubber roller I made for the job. The sheets were then spray lacquered on to the back to prevent the texture from disappearing when wetted by the paste. Again the "Bathroom" paste was used, starting at the base of the neck, and building up in small pieces.

I was more than satisfied with the result and left it to dry. The following morning I noticed that the texture had somewhat diminished, but was still there sufficiently to give its effect - That of some great boaconstrictor climbing out of the back of the lid.

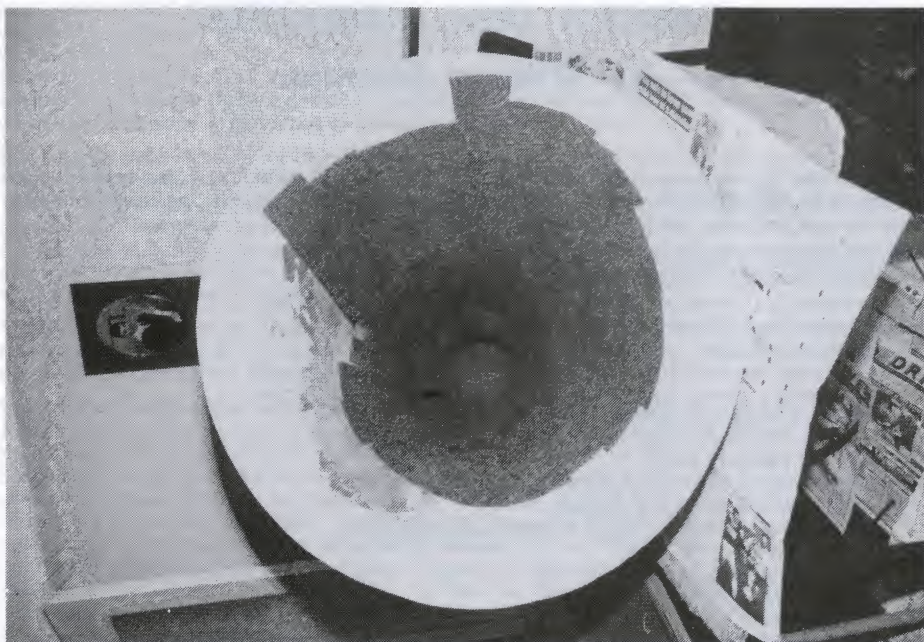
The horn was finished by applying a light coat of shellac over its whole surface, inside and out.

THE DREAM WAS NOW COMPLETE!

The other machines in my collection have been somewhat neglected since the arrival of this wonderful monster, and even Ann seems to have accepted it into our little home.

OF SPECIAL INTEREST TO MEMBERS IN THE SOUTH WEST

Would any members keen on forming a West of England Branch of the Society please send their comments to **Paul Morris**, [REDACTED] Exeter EX1 2HR. I would like to host some of the planned bi-monthly meetings and hope other people would be keen to help.



Fully-formed horn, showing the new covering



Horn with replacement papier-mâché section

PABST'S *DON QUICHOTTE*

by William Shaman

Peter Adamson has suggested in *Hillandale News*, issue 188 October 1992, that a brief account of the Chaliapin *DON QUICHOTTE* feature films might be of interest to the readership. First, the *cumulative* credits, taken from both the French- and English-language versions:

***DON QUICHOTTE (DON QUIXOTE)* (1933)**

Nelson Films, Ltd. - Vador Films

Presented by DuWorld Pictures, Inc., in association with Valdemar D. Bell
Gaumont-Franco-Film-Aubert Studios, Nice

Director: G. W. Pabst

Collaborator (assistant director) on French-language version: Jean de Limur

Collaborator (assistant director) on English-language version: John Farrow

Director of Production: Constantin Gelfman

Scenario: Paul Morand, after the novel by Miguel de Cervantes

Dialogue: Alexandre Arnoux

Camera: Nikolas Farkas and Paul Portier (aka Porter)

Settings (art director): Andrei Andreiev

Costumes: M. Pretzfelder (design); Maison Karinsky (execution)

Editor: Hans Oser

Sound mixing and synchronization: (?) Bell

Assistant sound engineer: H. Rappaport

Western Electric System

Music: Jacques Ibert; additional material: A. S. Dargomizhsky

Conductors: (?) Jacques Ibert and/or (?) Albert Coates

9 Reels, 2260 meters, B&W, approximately 73-83 minutes

LP 5516; c1 Jan 1935

Paris Premiere (French version): early April, 1933

London Premiere (English version): 25 May 1933

U.S. Premiere (English version): Cameo Theater, NYC, 22 Dec 1934

[Note: LP 5516 is the Library of Congress copyright registration number:
published motion-picture photoplay]

| CASTS: | (French Version) | (English Version) |
|----------------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Don Quixote | Feodor Chaliapin | Feodor Chaliapin |
| Sancho Panza | Dorville | George Robey |
| Dulcinée/Dulcinea | Renée Valliers | Renée Valliers |
| Sancho's Wife | Mady Berry | Emily Fitzroy |
| The Duchess | Arlette Marchal | Lydia Sherwood |
| The Niece | Mireille Balin | Sidney Fox |
| The Priest | Charles Leger | Frank Stanmore |
| The Gypsy King | ? | Wally Patch |
| The Duke | ? | Miles Mander |
| The Captain of Police | C. Martinelli | Oscar Asche |
| Carrasco | [René] Donnio | [René] Donnio |
| Servant at Inn | Genica Anet | Genica Anet |
| 1st Aubergiste (Innkeeper) | Leo Larive | ? |
| 2nd Aubergiste (Innkeeper) | Pierre Labry | ? |

Most prints of *DON QUICHOTTE/QUIXOTE* now in circulation are very badly mutilated, especially those available on videotape: the French-language videos I've seen run approximately 64 minutes, while the English-language versions, entitled *ADVENTURES OF DON QUIXOTE*, consume a mere 53 minutes. This, considering the *original* running time of approximately 83 minutes. There is, however, a subtitled French version available for rental on 16mm that claims to actually run 83 minutes, but this has not been viewed for confirmation. Has either version turned up on video in the U.K.?

Both versions of the film were shot between 1932 and 1933 and released in Europe and the U.K. as early as 1933. The film, presumably the English-language version, was not copyrighted in the U.S. until 1 January, 1935 (LP 5516), having premiered in New York City in December, 1934. The Paris premiere was reviewed in the *New York Times* on 23 April, 1933, and in *Variety* on 11 April, so the film must have opened there in about the first week of April. The two versions were shot as *separate* films, and are quite different, each having its own distinctive visual feel. While the treatment was the same for both, and the screenplays virtually identical, the fact remains that most of the major sequences were re-staged and re-shot.

The English translator of the Ronsard-Ibert songs and the Dargomizhsky "Bolero" ("Sierra Nevada") is not known, nor is the composer of Sancho's "Knights never eat, Knights never sleep," sung by George Robey in the English-language version and by Dorville in the French-language version.

Peculiar to the credits of the French-language version are a few technical details (the use of Kodak equipment and the Western Electric recording system, for example) and acknowledgement that Chaliapin sings through the courtesy of "His Master's Voice." The French credits do not identify the actors portraying the Duke and the Gypsy King, just as the credits of the English-language version omit the names of the two innkeepers, along with any reference to Arnoux's dialogue. Only a first initial could be found for the actor playing the Captain of Police in the French-language version. "Film Traders Ltd." is given as the distributor of the English version. The transliteration of the Russian names differs slightly between the French and English credits, and the second cameraman is listed as "Portier" and "Porter," respectively. The actress playing the servant at the inn is identified in both versions as "Genica Anet," but she has been found elsewhere bearing the surname "Athanasiou." Lee Atwell, in his book, *G. W. Pabst* (Boston: Twayne, 1977), pp. 169-170, further credits Lotte Reiniger with the "Chinese Shadows"—an element of a sequence that apparently has not survived in all prints. Atwell also claims that the well-known Russian character actor (and recorded pianist) Vladimir Sokoloff and a player named "Mafer" are among the French cast members, though their roles are not designated. This disparity between the French and English credits probably has more to do with the vintage of the print at hand and the fact that the film had numerous distributors over its confused commercial history, than anything else.

The conductor attributions could not be confirmed: neither Ibert (who conducted Chaliapin's commercial HMV recordings of the four Ronsard-Ibert songs in the Salle Chopin, Paris, on 9 January and 13 March, 1933) nor Coates are listed in the credits. Mention of Coates has not yet been encountered in reliable sources, and is given here only as a *possibility*, however slender.

For those who have not seen the films, Chaliapin's account of the title role is hauntingly memorable. In deference to Peter's inquiry, both Dorville and Robey *do* appear prominently as Sancho. Robey is simply marvellous—a treat to behold, especially for those of us on this side of the Atlantic who seldom have the opportunity to marvel at his work.

Finally, it might be mentioned that extensive excerpts from the English-language soundtrack were issued in January, 1959 on "The Golden Age of Opera" EJS 143, an Edward J. Smith release. Tolerably transferred, the LP includes:

SIDE 1 (EJS 143 A):

1. "SCENES FROM THE FILM *DON QUIXOTE* (ENGLISH VERSION 1932)" (26:10)

- a) CHALIAPIN, FOX, and DONNIO: Don Quixote Awakes (w. music and dialogue)
- b) "Fanfare" (w. music and dialogue)
- c) CHALIAPIN: "Bolero: Sierra Nevada" (Dargomizhsky) (w. dialogue: DONNIO and STANMORE)
- d) CHALIAPIN and PATCH: Knighthood Scene and Scene with Dulcinea
w. incidental music from Lully's *AMADIS DE GAULE* and dialogue)
- e) CHALIAPIN: "Chanson du départ" ("This Castle New") (Ronsard-Ibert)
- f) CHALIAPIN and ROBEY: The Battle for the Prisoners (w. music and dialogue)
- g) ROBEY: "Knights never eat, Knights never sleep" (composer?)
- h) CHALIAPIN, ROBEY, MANDER, SHERWOOD, et al: The Duke's Court (w. music and dialogue)

SIDE 2 (EJS 143 B):

1. "SCENES FROM THE FILM *DON QUIXOTE* (ENGLISH VERSION 1932)" (12:10)

- a) CHALIAPIN: "Chanson du Duc" ("This Song I Sing") (Ronsard-Ibert)
- b) CHALIAPIN, DONNIO, and MANDER: Battle with Carrasco (w. music and dialogue)
- c) CHALIAPIN and ROBEY: Combat with the Windmills (w. music and dialogue)
- d) CHALIAPIN: "Chanson de la mort de Don Quichotte" ("Stop Crying Sancho, my Dear") (Ronsard-Ibert)

The LP is completed with Chaliapin's *issued* (French-language) recordings from the score (DA 1310/1311 and VA 25/26), as well as the finale from Massenet's 1910 opera, recorded by Chaliapin with soprano Olive Kline in Liederkrantz Hall, New York City, on 7 April, 1927 (matrix CVE-38334/5-1, issued as Victor 6693/6812 and HMV DB 1096). Chaliapin created Massenet's Don in Monte Carlo in 1910, with bass André Gresse as Sancho.

In addition to the English versions of the Ronsard-Ibert songs, none of them issued, Chaliapin recorded the Dargomizhsky "Bolero" in Russian with Piero Coppola at the piano in the Salle Chopin, Paris, 9 January, 1933 (matrix OPG 431-1), during the first of the two Ibert-conducted sessions: the latter remained unpublished until its issue as Historic Masters HMA 46.

THE CLOCKWORK MUSIC GROUP

Programme for 1993

Meetings will be held in the activities room at The Science Museum in Blandford Street, Newcastle. As usual the meetings are arranged for Saturday afternoons between 2.00pm and 4.00pm approximately.

- | | |
|----------------|---|
| 27th February | The David Baynes <i>Road</i> or perhaps <i>Street Show</i> . Featuring further gems from his 78 vaults |
| 8th May | Ray Stephenson will present <i>Local Folk on 78 Discs</i> |
| 3rd July | Ed Bardsley is preparing another <i>Musical Quiz</i> covering a wide range of tastes |
| 18th September | Fred Hay will present his latest version of his wonderful Audio-visual on the <i>Development of the Talking Machine</i> |
| 11th December | Derek Greenacre has again promised us a <i>Thrill in the Dark</i> (by means of his Magic Lantern) |

Secretary: H. P. Bailey,

Whickham,

Newcastle upon Tyne NE 16 4ES

Tel: [REDACTED]

WAXING LYRICAL

by George Frow

The Victorians were always quick to take up a quill and go into verse on matters of the day, and this was not above seriously regarded poets of the time; two such were Tennyson and Browning. Although not writing about the Phonograph they lived just long enough to give it their voices. Any words on the Phonograph by that famous Scottish poetaster William McGonagall (1830 - c.1902) have not been seen, but certainly in his lifetime and since, moderate and bad poets dedicated stanzas to the instrument or to its inventor, and even quite a casual study of these has revealed more than twenty.

Of undoubted quality but a style that would not go far today was *The Phonograph's Salutation* by Rev. Horatio Nelson Powers, D.D., of Piermont on the Hudson who, on June 16th 1888, the day after Edison 'perfected' the Phonograph and was photographed in a near-Napoleonic pose, wrote that the inventor had invited him to speak into the new wonder of the day. Powers dedicated his poem to Edison and addressed it to Colonel Gouraud, and the Phonogram cylinder was forwarded promptly to "Little Menlo", Gouraud's house near London. It runs as follows:

I seize the palpitating air. I hoard
Music and Speech. All lips that breathe are mine.
I speak, and the inviolable word
Authenticates its origin and sign.

I am a tomb, a Paradise, a throne;
An angel, prophet, slave, immortal friend;
My living records, in their native time,
Convict the knave, and disputations end.

In me are souls embalmed. I am an ear
Flawless as truth, and truth's own tongue am I.
I am a resurrection; men may hear
The quick and dead converse, as I reply.

Hail English shores, and homes, and marts of peace!
New trophies, Gouraud, yet are to be won.
May "sweetness, light," and brotherhood increase!
I am the latest-born of Edison.

Pamphlets containing these words with a short preface in Power's hand were printed and were probably made available to those attending a session with the newly received Phonograph at Little Menlo on June 26th 1888. Gouraud had a high opinion of Powers, who was his brother-in-law and named one of his sons after him.

Probably forgotten today is poem called "Lines on Hearing the Phonograph" written by Percy F. Nursey to Henry Edmunds on February 27th 1878, ten years before Power's salutation. Edmunds will be remembered as first reporting the Phonograph in Great Britain in *The Times* early in 1878. Years later he presented the Graphophone in the United Kingdom.

Now Adam, Noah, Melchisadec,
And all their friends would laugh,
Could they but visit Earth again
And hear the Phonograph.

Sure Memnon son of morning's voice,
Could not be more melodious
Nor could old Stentor's roaring lungs
E'er utter sounds more odious.

The former's smooth and brooklet flows,
The latter's harsh as medicine,
But smooth or rough, like honour goes
To Thomas Alva Edison.

The Phonograph poems had a revival in popularity when The (Edison) National Phonograph Company started *The Edison Phonograph Monthly* in 1903. It soon established a better communication between the company and its jobbers and dealers than the earlier short journals, and paeans of praise for the machines from West Orange came through in quantity, though in most cases with far less quality.

An example of the latter dates from October 1903, and it seems the Graphophone must have caused the sickness here:

What made me sick
And hard to please,
And pray upon my bended knees
That its everlasting noise would cease
The — phone.
What made me laugh
And dance with glee
And sing with joy and happy be,
And kept me from going out on the spree
The Phonograph.

C. Vincent & Co., Western Australia

Some readers may be familiar with the following. It dates from October 1903 and first appeared in a newspaper advertisement by a Mr Bowen, a dealer in Kewanee, Illinois. It was used several more times in Edison journals and is an example of an acrostic, in which the first letter of each line makes up a word when read down:

P stands for Phonograph of Edison's make
 H stands for Him who will no other take
 O stands for Orders which exceed the supply
 N stands for Natural Tone of records you buy
 O stands for Others of inferior kind
 G stands for Gem, not left behind
 R stands for Records, the best in the land
 A stands for Artists in Edison's band
 P stands for People who own a machine
 H stands for Happiness there to be seen.

Quite a clever example of an acrostic was published in October 1907 by James A. H. Conway, an Edison dealer of Malden, Massachusetts, and is based on titles of Edison 2-minute cylinders, their numbers appearing at the end of the lines. It was called *Love, Religion and Humour*:

Love

Eileen Alannah (9264)
 Dreaming Love of You (9219)
 In The Valley of Kentucky (8013)
 Somebody's waiting for You (9476)

Religion

Onward Christian Soldiers (8461)
 Nearer my God to Thee (8136, 7267, 8022)
 Ring the Bells of Heaven (8854)
 Eternity-Eternity (9424)

Humour

Casey Courting his Girl (8103)
 On the Banks of the Rhein with a Stein (9124)
 Reuben Haskin's Ride in an Auto (8619)
 Down on the Brandywine (8712, 8748)

Many other examples could be quoted, there are enough to make up a small booklet, Verses the dealers put on their business cards, parodies on songs of the day and jingles from non-Edison pages, some of such poor quality that they are not worth the copying down, and even praise for the Graphophone, but that's for another time - a long time.

A COLLECTOR'S DIARY

by Stephen Gadd

Everybody wants something in life. Wallis Simpson wanted to be Queen of Britain. Alexander the Great wanted to rule the world. By way of comparison my ambition to own an EMG Mark X was fairly modest.

The first thing any prospective EMG purchaser must do is to convince his or her spouse of the merits of ownership. The Mark X is a very anti-social item to bring into the family home. It is very much the Rottweiler of talking machines being, large, ugly and loud.

My wife was duly persuaded that no home was complete without an EMG Mark X. Now came the next step. Buying one.

Here the plot begins to thicken and my diary had best take up the story:

26th July 1990. Dear Diary. Venue: Christies, South Kensington. Well this is my first time at an auction. It is all very interesting, especially how the items in the catalogue look so nice in the photographs and so tatty in real life. The E. M. Ginn Expert Senior is a sorry specimen indeed. It has been clumsily converted from wind-up to electric, its flex dangling sadly from the redundant winding-handle hole.

Far more interesting is the EMG tropical 'portable' gramophone. Portable! It must weigh about 80 kilograms and have taken up the intrepid owner/traveller's entire baggage allowance.

The auction begins. Excitement mounts. I wave my card half-heartedly at the Senior, dropping out at £1,400. The final score - the

Senior fetched £1,700, the Tropical £550.50. With hindsight the Tropical would have been a good buy, even though it may not actually be unique - in all probability all of the other specimens have been stolen by baggage-handlers abroad, or else have been awaiting collection from the lost baggage department of Bermuda Airport for the last 60 years.

Return home disappointed.

27th July 1990. Dear Diary. Time to approach the dealers. Telephone attendances as follows namely:

Dealer A: "No, I haven't had one in for ages."

Dealer B: "No, we don't tend to get them in this area at all."

Dealer C: "EMG? gold dust, sheer gold dust. No I don't have one."

Dealer D: "No, try Dealer C. He might have one."

Dealer E: "No, and don't be too fussy - Mark X wind-up indeed! Just grab the first one that comes to hand!"

12th October 1990. Dear Diary. Salvation is at hand. Phillips West 2 have no less than three EMG's in their next sale in November. George Glastris is kindly arranging a private viewing. On offer - Mark X wind-up (the horn has done approximately 10 rounds with Mike Tyson, but otherwise sound), a Mark IX electric (not working - but hums tunelessly when plugged in), and an E. M. Ginn Expert Junior with electric motor.

The Junior has been so badly abused by its previous owner that Phillips presumably got a care order on it. The horn is fascinating - with two wire strands strung across it - a sort of minimalist Klingsor.

20th November 1990. Dear Diary. Drive to London with Volvo back down to accommodate EMG. Get stuck in seven mile tailback on M25. Arrive just in time for auction. Bid resolutely for Mark X. Drop out at £2,000. Final score - Mark IX - £1,600; Mark X £2,600; E. M. Ginn Junior £1,100.

Drive home empty-handed and disappointed. Wife pretends to be sympathetic but I suspect that she is actually quite glad.

22nd November 1990. Dear Diary. Telephoning the dealers yet again! Telephone attendances as follows, namely:

Dealer A: "No, I haven't had one for ages. Didn't you call before?"

Dealer B: "No, I don't recall ever having had one in."

Dealer C: "Yes, I have got a Mark IX but you wouldn't want it. Why not? Well, you just wouldn't. Believe me, you really wouldn't. No, I really wouldn't come to see it in

any event if I was you. You really wouldn't want it. I promise."

Dealer D: "I think that dealer C has got one Mark IX at the moment, but if it is the one I think it is then you really wouldn't want it."

Dealer E: "None, but I know of a collector who owns a mark IX and I will see if he wants to sell it."

23rd November 1990

Dealer E: "No, he doesn't want to."

24th November 1990. Dear Diary. In despair I am sending a small ad. to *Hillandale News*.

End Jan. 1991 - Advert appears.

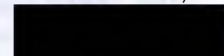
31st Jan. 1991 - Fellow C.L.P.G.S. member telephoned. He has read my advert. in *Hillandale News*. Didn't I know that X (who lives just up the road) has a Mark X wind-up and may sell.

1st February 1991 - Mark X returns home. Caruso, Gall-Curci, Tetrizzini and Chaliapin now appearing as large as life in my very own dining room in Littlehampton. Bless you *Hillandale News*!

C.L.P.G.S. BOOKLIST

From April 1st 1993 all orders for items from the Booklist should be sent to:

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Caistor,
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OBITUARY - THEODORE EDISON

The death has taken place at the age of 94 of Theodore Miller Edison at his home at West Orange, New Jersey. He was the remaining son of Thomas Alva Edison and the last of the inventor's line to carry his surname, and was born in July 1898 on the day after his mother Mina heard that her favourite brother had been killed in Cuba in the Spanish-American War. He was the youngest of three children born to Thomas Edison and his second wife Mina, his older brother being Charles, who became Secretary of the Navy and Governor of New Jersey from 1941 to 1944, and who died in 1969. Madeleine Sloan, Theodore's elder sister died in 1979. She had four sons. The inventor's first wife Mary Stilwell had given birth to two sons and a daughter and all are now deceased.

Theodore Edison graduated from The Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1923 with a physics degree and soon assumed control of the research laboratories of Edison Industries where he helped to improve the Diamond Discs system and ways of playing them, and overcame the technical difficulties of cutting and playing fine grooves, some of 450 turns per inch in the Edison Long Playing system, and the special low-speed discs for recorded broadcasts and 'Cine-Music'. He developed and patented the electric playing heads for the Edison Radio

Phonographs. All this was not without profound differences with his father who seemed to turn his back on the urgency of moving in step with the 1920s when domestic radio was competing with the phonographs.

After his father's death in 1931 Theodore Edison established his own research laboratory across Main Street from the Edison works under the name of Calibron Industries Inc. and broadened his interest to a wide range of scientific subjects, one reason being to generate work for the Edison staff. He was also a dedicated campaigner on conservation and environmental projects and a leader in the protest against the destruction of the old Edison factory at West Orange in 1974, campaigning to have the buildings preserved for conversion into a pioneer re-cycling unit in a waste disposal programme. They were eventually felled with explosives, still containing much of the old machinery and office equipment.

A reserved man he was sometimes seen at re-unions of surviving Edison artists held at West Orange up to 15 years ago.

Theodore Edison died on November 24th 1992 at his home in Llewellyn Park after a long illness. He married Anne Marie Osterhut in 1925 and she survives him. There were no children.

G.F.

CONVERSATIONS WITH MR EDISON

by Ronald Dethlefsen

I first talked with Theodore M. Edison in the spring of 1980 when I was writing my first volume about Edison Blue Amberol Records. I suspected that he was about the only person then living with any direct knowledge about the Edison Company's phonograph recording and manufacturing. So I was very pleased to find his laboratory number was in the West Orange, NJ phone book. I called the number, a voice answered and I asked to speak to Theodore Edison. The voice said, "This is Theodore Edison." I introduced myself and told him of my projected Blue Amberol book. He said that he wasn't too knowledgeable about the records as he was just a teenager when the records were introduced, but he went on to answer questions I had about Diamond Discs and his research regarding Edison LP discs.

Thus began a series of letters from me and responses from him which culminated in a series of interviews in his laboratory and at his home in 1983 and 1985. Mr Edison told me a lot of information which found its way into the books I have published about Edison Records. However, he held me to a pledge not to quote him directly. Ever the careful scientist, he was fearful that his recollections of events and processes 60-odd years in the past would be in error. But the information he passed to me was always validated by Edison Company papers on deposit at the Edison National Historic Site.

It was Mr Edison who told me the story of the effect that dandruff-contaminated feather dusters had on Diamond Disc records (see *Edison Disc Artists and Records 1910-1929*, p.150). One story that didn't find its way into print relates to polishing diamond styli for phonographs. Mr Edison said that in polishing diamonds olive oil was used as a lubricant, and that the oil would deteriorate if used in natural sunlight. Thus, polishing was carried out using artificial light. Furthermore, it was found that small and large particles of

diamond dust tended to clump together and foul the polishing process. However, the two types of dust were separated by alcohol added to the oil. This held the small particles in suspension, while the large grit fell to the bottom of the polishing apparatus and could be decanted away like sediment in old wine. Production of diamond styli reached 500 per day at one point in time, according to Mr Edison.

Mr Edison remained quite spry and active when I last visited him in June 1985. I had driven up to his English Tudor style home in Llewellyn Park one morning during my visit to West Orange and, after talking a while, he asked me to drive him down to his laboratory (he was no longer driving his Ford V-8). I dropped him off at his laboratory and I enquired if I could come back for him later in the day. He said, "No, although you can't see it from here, my home property actually backs up to my laboratory and I have a hole in the fence which allows me to take a short cut home." He was then in his mid-eighties.

Theodore Edison was very helpful and patient toward this researcher who had only a little knowledge and a lot of questions about Edison phonographs and records. It was a wonderful experience to have been able to correspond, visit and talk with him. Mr Edison was a precious link with times and events of the past and I will always remember the hours I spent with him as being truly golden.

(The above article is reproduced by kind consent of Ronald Dethlefsen of Bakersfield, CA, U.S.A. It originally appeared in the January 1993 edition of *In The Groove*, the magazine of The Michigan Antique Phonograph Society (MAPS). Professor Dethlefsen's fine book on Edison Disc Artists and Blue Amberols will be known to many members. Ed.)

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Programme for 1993

| | |
|-----------------------|---|
| Sunday 25th April | Canal Trip (To be arranged) |
| Sunday 16th May | Trip to Pocklington (To be arranged) |
| Sunday 20th June | Liverpool Open Day at Barry and Pam's |
| Sunday 18th July | Steam an additional attraction at Sheffield |
| Sunday 19th September | Cumbria Meeting |
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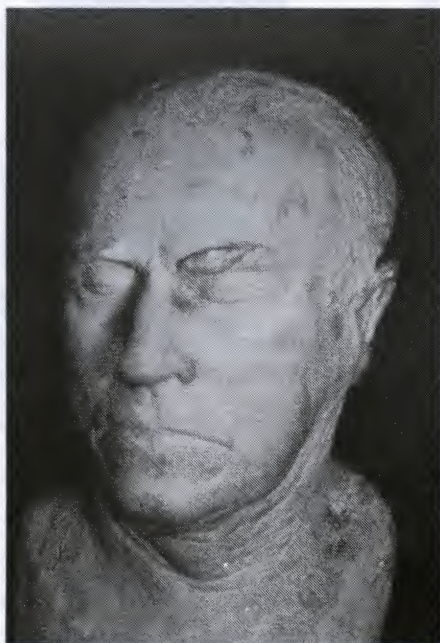
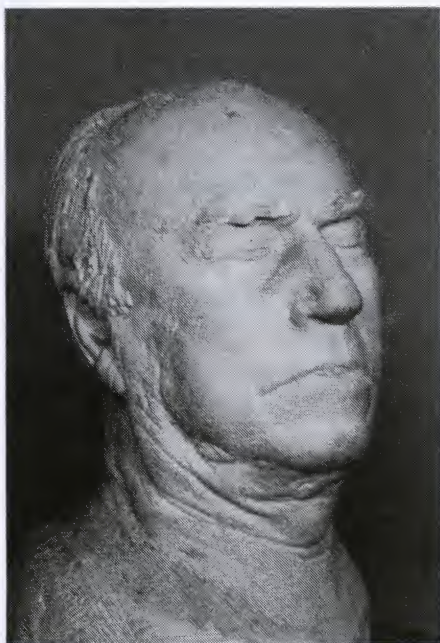
EDISON'S DEATH MASK DISCOVERED

by George Frow

From California Neil Maken reports the discovery of a death mask of the inventor, made after his death on October 18th 1931. Apparently arrangements for it to be taken were made privately by his son Charles.

Experts have declared the plaster head moulding to be authentic; it was made by James Earle Fraser, a friend of the Edison family and a well-known sculptor. Fraser was the designer of the American Buffalo Nickel and the U. S. Victory Medal, and has credits for many other notable artworks, both national and private.

Little is known of the last sixty years of the Edison mask but it was discovered in a private collection of death masks. Impressions of the hands were also taken at the time, but these have not been found.



The death mask of Thomas A. Edison: View (1) and view (2)

BRINGING EARLY SOUND RECORDINGS TO LIFE

by Tony Freeman

Recently introduced to the world of old gramophones, graphophones and phonographs by Paul Tritton's book *The Lost Voice of Queen Victoria*, I have found *Hillandale News* to be a fascinating publication, and undoubtedly one of its great strengths is the ability of its contributors to ferret out interesting recordings from long defunct catalogues.

For me one of the most interesting aspects of Tritton's research was the use of the CEDAR computer system to enhance the reproduction of the voice on the cylinder. Having heard the recording as originally reproduced (which was a cacophony of clicks, pops and hiss) and then contrasting it with the processed recording, I was extremely impressed. Despite some real and alleged shortcomings in the process, the results were impressive enough to attract the attention of the world's media this time last year. I have since speculated what the results would be if other old recordings were treated in this way?

I have to confess that I have a vested interest. For some 15 years now I have collected recordings of Jazz and Blues artists, mainly on vinyl and cassette, with the occasional 78, which unfortunately I can't play on my Hi-Fi system. The artists include Louis Armstrong, Bessie Smith, Ma Rainey, Count Basie as well as countless others from the earliest days of Jazz and Blues to the present day. For me the fascination of these earlier recordings is in trying to imagine what it would have been like to have been present when they were made. Being born in 1961, I have found that many of the artists I admire have either died or have been long past their peak by the time

modern H-Fidelity recordings were made. Needless to say, very few were still alive by the time I began to attend concerts in the late 1970s.

I would dearly like to have the hardware to play my 78s, but with two small children, business and mortgage, the odds against immediate purchase and subsequent survival of both gramophone and records at the moment are low! I therefore obtain reissues and compilations on cassette and hope for the best! Unfortunately one is so easily disappointed with the selections and quality.

Many of the items which interest me are now out of copyright and some unscrupulous entrepreneurs re-issue recordings of back catalogues where the sound reproduction does little if anything to capture the artistry and excellence of the performances. It is very frustrating to obtain a recording of a famous performance and to be able to barely hear it because of hiss, snap, crackle and pop! This is especially frustrating if one has read of a particular performance, gone to the trouble of obtaining a recording on cassette or CD and then finding that the quality of reproduction is so awful that wonders what the fuss was all about in the first place.

One of these is Louis Armstrong's 1928 recording (with the Hot Five) of *West End Blues*. This was one of a series of recordings made by Armstrong between 1925 and 1928 (long before the advent of high fidelity), as part of a series of recordings with his "Hot Five" and "Hot Seven". Armstrong at this time was less commercially orientated than he was shortly to become, and was pushing back the frontiers of improvisation.

West End Blues is a remarkable example of this improvisation. Although the main theme is instantly recognisable as Blues, it is introduced by Armstrong's remarkable cadenza which utilises every one of the notes on the chromatic scale.

Previous listenings had proved very frustrating. The notes are there, but the tone is thin and tinny, even when reproduced in a good quality Hi-Fi system, and one's appreciation of the music is somewhat dulled. This has for many years been an intractable problem, especially when listening to group recordings. You can sense that something is there, but it is often lost in the pops and hiss and it is difficult if not impossible for the ear tuned to modern Hi-Fi to pick out individual instruments from ancient recordings.

However, after hearing the results of say, the CEDAR system, on a 103 year-old recording, I kept a lookout for examples of other systems being used on old music recordings - especially old Jazz performances.

Imagine my surprise when *Jazz Cassette* magazine appeared on sale with a "free" cassette of 60+ year old recordings of several artists - with, unbelievably Louis Armstrong's *West End Blues*! Needless to say, I bought it immediately. (Good job, the magazine folded shortly afterwards!)

What particularly intrigued me about this issue was that it featured Robert Parker, a Jazz collector and broadcaster who must have suffered the same sort of frustration that I have - only he had done something about it. Parker's speciality is to painstakingly edit old recordings to try and extract the maximum amount of detail. He has used the CEDAR system to do this on occasions and, being a sound engineer by trade, also tracks down clicks which the system has missed. The result should be recordings that have a sound image which is extremely realistic and detailed, allowing one to appreciate the music in more detail.

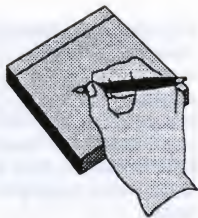
In practice, one is not disappointed. It comes as something of a revelation to hear a 1928 recording of *West End Blues* where you can almost sense Armstrong's presence, so clear and rich are the tones reproduced. Also, possibly for the first time, one hears the rest of the Hot Five in detail as well. Indeed, the cassette supplied included a number of other recordings from King Oliver, Jelly Roll Morton and His Red Hot Peppers and Henry Allen. Indeed, some of these were just as good as some early High-Fidelity recordings.

If such processes can continue to be developed, and to be made more accessible, who knows what may result? I, for one, would like to explore even earlier recordings than those mentioned above, but I am more than aware of how rare and fragile some of the discs and cylinders are. If other individuals such as Parker can be encouraged to get the best possible results from what remains, the preservation and wider appreciation of old sound recordings will almost certainly result.

I would like to think that the technology could be available in the near future so the enthusiast can enhance the enjoyment of his own collection of recordings. Is this unrealistic? I think not. I own a computer and a scanner which cost about the same as a good quality Hi-Fi. These days I can scan an ancient photograph, retouch it, enhance the contrast and detail and reproduce the result on photographic paper or film for framing or printing. The results are often most satisfying, and as well as my own work, I occasionally get commissions to restore photos in this way. A comparable system for a collector of recordings could be a boon, and I for one look forward to the day when I can edit the crackles and pops from my 78s and begin to appreciate the music as it was originally played.

Note: The Robert Parker recordings of Jazz Classics are available from CDS Records, Durham Cottages, 12, Mendfield Street, Faversham, Kent ME13 7JY.

LETTERS



Peter Dawson and Olga Wood

Dear Mr Hamilton,

I recently found two copies of Zonophone Record X-42535, matrix 9696b, of Peter Dawson as Hector Grant singing *John, John, put your trousers on*. One had the standard wording 'Reproduced in Germany' (the Zonophone equivalent of G&T's 'Reproduced in Hanover'), but the other, to my great surprise, had been 'Reproduced in Russia'. This appears on none of my other Zonophones. Was this record so popular that Hanover could not meet the demand, or are there other reasons for the pressing being carried out in Russia?

Still on the subject of Zonophones, I was intrigued to find that my copy of X-44085, *I Surrender All*, sung by Madame Deering, Miss Amy Augarde, Messrs. Ernest Pike, Peter Dawson and Ernest Clifford, comes from ten-inch matrix 8804e, the next recording after Olga Wood's aria from *Joan of Arc* in Jonathan Dobson's discography in *Hillandale News* 188. Was this really a quintet or did Mrs Wood, unlike Melba, deign to become one of the "b----y chorus"?

Yours sincerely,

Paul Cleary, Wetherby, West Yorkshire.

13¾" Fonotipias

Dear Chris,

I am writing this letter as a small addendum to George Taylor's interesting review of the 13¾" Fonotipias from Harold Wayne's Collection. My main point is to put in a word for Edoardo Garbin, who was rather dismissed by dear old L.H.R. - probably because of the playing speeds of his G&Ts which sound terrible at 78rpm but are spot on at 69rpm.

I have the 69011 *Brindisi* from *Cavalleria Rusticana* and it is a quite stunning record. I should point out that in this rare and 'de luxe' 13¾" series the tenors

consist of 2 by De Reszke, 5 by Bonci and 4 by Garbin. Of the solo items the Bonci *Mignon* 69007, which I also have, is quite certainly, in my humble opinion and that of others who have heard it, the most vivid 'in the room' recording of his voice. These records all play at 80rpm and are numbered, as are the Tamagno G&Ts. My copy of Bonci's 69018 is No.5.

My copy of the Barrientos *Dinorah* on 69002 is also very early, being No.35 with a gold Fonotipia label, indicating a really early recording date. It is a very forward and brilliant recording. Luckily all the records in this series that I have are in very good condition.

On my copy of the Bréjean-Silver and Scaremberg duet from *Faust* on 86001 (No.135) I am unable to detect the squeeze effect. I compared this with the *Romeo* duet by the same artists on a 10¾" record and both sound to my ears idiomatic and very romantic. In her defence I should add that Massenet wrote a special extra aria specifically for her in *Manon*, namely the *Fabliau* which she recorded on Fonotipia - just as Gounod wrote *Only Bravest Heart* for the great Santley.

These comments are intended only as supplements and are in no way meant to criticise George Taylor's praiseworthy review.

As a matter of interest I had the good luck to see in the house of a friend in Barcelona a commemorative post card celebrating the premiere there of *Zaza*. There were five photographs on it, all signed in ink, of Mascagni, Toscanini, Sammarco, Garbin and Stehle, his wife. This would tend to prove or support my basic point that Garbin has been in the past very under-rated.

Can anyone supply me with a copy of Garbin's 10" or 12" G&T of his *Donna non vidi mai* from *Manon*? I do hope so!

Yours sincerely,

George Fraser, Bearsden, Glasgow

Dictaphone conversion

Dear Editor,

I reply to Mr Hodgson's letter in the December 1992 *Hillandale News* asking whether I had wired my cartridge correctly on my Dictaphone phonograph. The cartridge is wired exactly the same as the one I use for playing Pathé records - i.e. in series. I do hope Mr Hodgson doesn't think that I am casting aspersions on his work. He did not supply the cartridge (I never said he did) but only fitted a two-minute stylus to my stylus shank.

I have had several different styli from his company over the years and will obviously have more made in the future. I only mentioned where the stylus came from so others attempting a similar conversion would know where to get one. Without the Expert Stylus Company's wonderful service I really don't know what the record collecting community would do.

Sincerely,
Rick Hardy, Watford, Hertfordshire

Robert Radford and Oscar Natzke

Dear Chris,

At the tender age of six, I obtained an old Columbia Grafonola and ninety records from a jumble sale; or to be more correct, my parents got me it. I believe it cost sixpence for the whole lot. There were many wonderful records in this little package but one stood out in my mind as something very special. It was Robert Radford singing *O Isis and Osiris* from *The Magic Flute*.

I enjoyed this selection of records until I left home to serve my apprenticeship. My gramophone and records together with all my other possessions were eventually thrown out as I had made my home here in Barrow. My interest in recorded sound continued in up-to-date equipment which I made for myself.

In 1983 I was given an Edison Gem and some cylinders and my collecting urge had begun. I collected an old wind-up gramophone and some records, and then started seriously to look for a copy of that Robert Radford *O Isis* record. I searched in vain; for one thing I didn't know the name of the artist or the make of the record, having only *O Isis* and a 10" red labelled disc to go on. As you might expect, I bought many versions of this aria, which I enjoyed, but none were the same as that Robert Radford record I remembered from my childhood.

I was in Southport at Joe Winstanley's 'shop' where he sold classical records. I happened to ask him if he had heard of a record of the above. He said that it sounded like Robert Radford, and that he hadn't a copy in stock but would look out for one.

The next time I visited Joe's, he had a copy and he played it for me on his E.M.G. I was three feet off the floor - Yes this was it! I couldn't believe that I had at last found it. It was on a Zonophone Celebrity Record, number GO 17 with *O Star of Eve* on the reverse. Joe recognised my obvious delight and made me a present of the disc.

You may think that this is the end of the story. My interest in this aria continued as I had by this time quite a number of recordings of it by a host of singers. Then in January 1992 I discovered an antique shop in Lancaster which had just obtained a large collection of classical 78s. Amongst these was another version of *O Isis* by an Oscar Natzke (the name meant nothing to me). I bought it and took it home.

I placed this 12" Columbia on the turntable of my E.M.G. Mark X and out came the most magical sound I have ever heard. This voice, as far as I was concerned, had all the perfection of tone, sensitivity, power and diction, and left all the other performers of this aria out in the cold. I have played this disc to many people, most of whom have never heard of him, but like myself have found the performance very moving indeed. On playing the disc at the Northampton Phonofair in 1992 I was asked by a number of people for the name of the artist. None of them had heard of him.

Since that time I have found a number of other recordings of him, which I list out below. So far I have found out that was born in New Zealand, probably of Maori stock, and died at the age of 39 in 1950.

If any reader knows more of this wonderful bass recording artist I would be very grateful to hear from you. Robert Radford has met his match.

12"

O Isis and Osiris;
Within these temple walls Columbia DX 1370

O Isis and Osiris
La Calunnia (Barber of Seville) Parlophone E 11423

Pilgrims song (Tchaikovsky)
Myself when young Parlophone E 11397

The village blacksmith
Honour and Arms (Samson) Parlophone E11402

Hear ye winds and waves (Handel)
The song of Hybrias the Cretan Parlophone E 11426

10"

The Yeomen of England (German)
Four jolly sailormen (German) Parlophone R 2723

The Floral Dance (Katie Moss)
For England (Brandon - Murray) Parlophone R 2734

Shenandoah (Trad.)
Blow the man down and Hullabaloo Balay (Trad.)
Columbia DB 2167

The Heavens are Ringing (Beethoven)
I love you dear (Beethoven) **Columbia DB 2460**

Madamina! Il catalogo è questo
(*Don Giovanni*) **Columbia DB 2291**

On some of these discs he is referred to as the New Zealand Bass, and his name is sometimes spelt *Natzke* and sometimes *Natzka*.

Yours phonographically,
L. Miles Mallinson, Barrow-in-Furness, Cumbria

{*You will learn a little more about Oscar Natzke in a letter from Peter Downes of Wellington, New Zealand in the February 1993 issue of Gramophone. Ed*}

Queen Victoria's Voice

Dear Sir,

I attended the recent meeting of the Society at which Paul Tritton spoke about the supposed cylinder of Queen Victoria's voice, and found it a very absorbing evening. It was clear from the animated discussion afterwards that everyone considered band 2 of the cylinder was the only significant one, as it was the only one which revealed a female voice. I was quite surprised that no-one commented on the significance of band 3 - the clearest of the three, which is that of a man's voice singing a few bars and then whistling. Mr Tritton had earlier in the evening read part of a letter (received since the publication of his book), written by (I think) Sir Henry Ponsonby, the Queen's private secretary. In this is described the occasion of the recording of the Queen's voice, and it was stated that other members of the household had at the same time recorded their voices. One gentleman (whose name escapes me) had apparently *whistled a tune*. It is therefore quite probable that this is the performance that is represented on band 3.

But it was also pointed out that band 3 is recorded in the opposite direction to the others, and at a much higher speed. This would indicate that it was recorded on a different occasion, and presumably on a different machine to the other two. This means that if band 3 does represent the gentleman of Queen Victoria's household, the female voice on band 2 could not possibly be that of the Queen herself.

Yours faithfully,
Michael P. Walters, Richmond, Surrey

Poor Thorpe Bates

Dear Editor,

I am pleased that Frank Andrews is giving us notes upon the singers on our old records. Some years ago I visited baritone George Baker several times, when we talked about his own career and recordings and about others. Even in advanced years, he had an excellent memory from which he drew kindly descriptions of contemporary singers of his younger days, clearly recalling their voices and methods of presentation; bringing them back to life. (I wish that tiny tape recorders had been available then.) One day I asked about Thorpe Bates, saying that he did not come out well on records. The reply began, "Poor Thorpe Bates", and went on to tell me that Bates could be an exciting singer on stage or in concert, but never conquered the recording horn.

Thorpe Bates appeared in *The Maid of the Mountains* opposite José Collins where he gave a first rate performance. Mr Baker also thought very highly of Miss Collins whose performance on stage really brought the audience to the edge of their seats as the saying is. So, after reading Frank's notes and thinking of George Baker, I took out some Bates and Collins recordings, turned up the volume and really listened. At once it was clear that Miss Collins has 'personality plus' (like her mother as one reads). It was also clear that Thorpe Bates was excellent but marred by the recording system. Yes, George Baker was right!! So, add *The Maid* to Thorpe Bates' accomplishments. It ran for 1,352 performances, paid off the late George Edwardes' £80,000 debts, with profits - and gave us some memorable music.

Yours sincerely,
Ernie Bayly, Bournemouth. Dorset

Help please!

Dear Sir,

I have been trying for some time to find out any information on the artists listed below whom I have on record. Can anyone help me?

1) Derek Barsham who sings *I'll walk beside you and Beyond the dawn* on **Decca M611**

2) P. Nifosi (cello) who performs *Roundelay and Cantilena* on **Zonophone 2391**

Yours faithfully,
W. R. Violen, Holland-on-Sea, Essex

REPORTS

London Meeting, December 17th 1992

For his debut at the National Sound Archive, Tom Little began his programme entitled *Entirely for Pleasure* with the *Entry of the Gladiators* played by the Imperial Military Band, which he said reminded him of childhood visits to the Bertram Mills Circus.

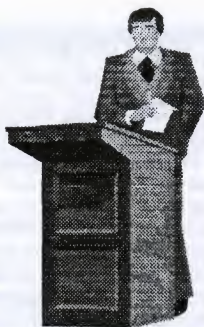
The records of Gracie Fields singing *I Took My Harp to a Party* and of Bransby Williams as *Scrooge* which Tom played next had been family favourites. After these we were invited to take a stroll round London and we heard *Round The Marble Arch* played by The Blue Lyres with a vocal refrain, probably by Sam Browne. We then heard Jack Jackson and his Orchestra in *There's a Lovely Lake in London* followed by Debroy Somers and His Band in *The Changing of The Guard* which had a fine vocal by Raymond Newell.

A 'Refreshing Break' was then suggested with the playing of John Nolan's version of *She Makes a Nice Cup of Tea* and *I Want a Pie with a Plum in it*. Theatre organ enthusiasts were catered for with a recording of Bobby Pagan at the organ of the Gaumont State Cinema, Kilburn playing *Three Minutes of Offenbach*.

Tom's interest in opera was illustrated with the *Prelude to Act 3* of Wagner's *Lohengrin* played by the Bayreuth Festival Orchestra conducted by Heinz Tietjen. The programme ended with the playing of Henry Wood's *Fantasia on British Sea Songs* which was most apt as our meetings are now held in a building so near the Royal Albert Hall.

A fine entertaining evening with something for everyone.

Geoff Edwards



London Meeting, January 21st 1993

To an enthusiastic capacity audience of Society members together with visitors from the Science Museum Paul Tritton gave an account of his investigational researches into the *Lost Voice of Queen Victoria* while Peter Copeland of the National Sound Archive explained his technical involvement in extracting the sound recorded on the cylinder involved.

For members who have not read Mr Tritton's account of the re-discovery of a cylinder which almost definitely contains the voice of Queen Victoria, the additional background and subsequent developments made since publication can only enhance the strength of his beliefs.

Paul Tritton first gave a run-down on the life of Henry Edmunds, the Victorian entrepreneur, inventor and innovator, whose interest in sound recording led to Queen Victoria recording her voice in 1888. He played a part in introducing the Hon. Charles Rolls to Mr Henry Royce. (Full details of this story are given in a new biography of Henry Edmunds by Paul Tritton *The Godfather of Rolls-Royce*.) We learnt that Henry Edmunds was not only at Menlo Park the very day Edison made his famous recording in 1877, but he also brought back to Britain the first tin-foil phonograph for demonstration and he wrote the first account of the phonograph which was published in the *Times* in 1878.

We were then enlightened regarding his involvement with Bell-Tainter after his expectation of representing Edison's machines failed through Edison devoting his energies to the development of incandescent lighting. From this connection Henry demonstrated the improved Model A Bell-Tainter Graphophone to the British Association in Bath in 1888. Balmoral heard of this demonstration and although the Queen's diaries were modified by her daughter, luckily for us a visitor gave his wife a graphic description of members of the royal household and of the Queen speaking into a tube and the playing back of cylinders.

Peter Copeland then explained the procedures that followed after being requested to process what apparently looked to be a cut but unrecorded cylinder. In fact the initial inspection was carried out only because of its apparent content. There was no machine to play the cylinder on as the Science Museum's model had been modified to take Edison tapered-style cylinders. The National Sound Archive had a mandrel specially made but as Bell-Tainter cylinders have no tapered interior it was not apparent where to place the stylus to start play-back. With the

information provided by American collectors and from the audience we learnt that the Type A machine ran at about 140 rpm and the later Model B at 180 rpm. Apparently the cylinders were not sold in Britain, and when used were purely for recording, having no facility for being shaved. In fact, of the three short passages inscribed on the cylinder, two are in one direction at 140 rpm and the other in the reverse direction at 180 rpm. Mr Copeland played the original transcription he made and then the later one made utilising CEDAR, the computerised process, licensed by Cedar Audio Ltd. of Cambridge. The cylinder was displayed by a member of the Science Museum staff, who handled it not with kid gloves but special plastic ones.

In conclusion, discussion from the audience brought to light significant differences in the Bell-Tainter Graphophones which, although not common in Britain, shed light on the recording process and their presence at Balmoral.

The Society is indebted to these learned gentlemen for such an interesting evening. Members may, by prior arrangement, listen to the recording at the National Sound Archive in Exhibition Road. Paul Tritton's book *The Lost Voice of Queen Victoria* can be ordered through any bookseller. The ISBN number is 1-873361-11-4.

G.W.

Midlands Group Meeting at Carrs Lane Methodist Centre 16th December 1992

Chairman Eddie Dunn welcomed regulars, new members and visitors and in his report considered we had enjoyed a successful twelve months. Membership had increased and we had staged the usual gramophone exhibition at Himley Hall, Dudley and our local phonofair at Walsall.

We are going to stage a National Phonofair in Willenhall, near Wolverhampton in September and we hope members from all over the country will attend.

A new Midland Group Constitution was produced by Secretary Phil Bennett and adopted. It is basically the same as the earlier one which was drawn up 25 years ago, but changes emphasising the rights of the Group and the individual members have been added.

The committee elected for the next twelve months is as follows:

| | |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Chairman: | Eddie Dunn |
| Deputy Chairman and Reporter: | Geoff Howl |
| Secretary: | Phil Bennett |
| Treasurer: | Roger Preston |
| Committee Members: | Wally Fowler and Richard Taylor |

The dates of the 1993/94 meetings are as follows:

| | |
|--------------------|--|
| 20th March: | Mediaeval Music with Mark Morgan |
| 15th May: | Title to be advised presented by Ed Parker |
| 17th July: | Musical Quiz with Wally Fowler and Geoff Howl |
| 18th September: | To be advised |
| 20th November: | " " " |
| 15th January 1994: | A.G.M. |

It has been decided that in future committee business will be conducted on separate days from ordinary meetings. This will leave more time for general discussion, buying and selling etc. We hope members will benefit from this.

Following the practice of recent years, there was no official programme following the A.G.M. business. Instead some members brought along a number of their favourite records or tapes, and amongst others we were regaled with John McCormack, Robb Wilton, Jack Hylton and Duke Ellington.

A nice informal way to close a formal meeting.

Geoff Howl



REVIEWS

The Old Bull and Bush

This CD features Music Hall stars George Robey, Harry Champion and Florrie Forde, all of whom began their careers in the last century and lived to be still active during World War II, when I heard them personally via our much-overworked radio, each contributing to the "war effort".

For this reason examples of the three are re-issued together, but each made sufficient recordings to fill a whole CD. Each had a sufficiently varied range of material to maintain interest for that length of time.

Here, Florrie Forde has one early recording, *The Old Bull and Bush* (which hostelry still stands between Golders Green and Hampstead Heath) from 1904, but the rest are from the 1929-34 period, being accompanied by dance bands of very uninteresting sound, even though the Edison Bell Radio records would have been made through the medium of Paul Voigt's excellent ribbon microphones, accounting for the fine reproduction we hear. Although actually recorded in the electrical era, such songs as *What happened to the Manx cat's tail?*, *Goodbye-ee*, *Priceless Percy*, *When the fields are white with daisies* (not a Music Hall song), *A Lassie from Lancashire* and *Oh, Flo!* are from many years earlier. The age of the latter is revealed by the line "riding ON a motor car" - for that's what people did in the early days of cars. Rudy Vallee's *Stein Song* was heard everywhere during the late Twenties and early Thirties, which no doubt gave rise to *Stein* that Miss Forde sings in this compilation. Actually both of these horrid songs should have been sunk without trace decades ago. Miss Forde had many better "A sides" which could have been used instead. All are well-transferred so you can hear her clearly, but as an older woman, yet still in strong voice.

Harry Champion was from the Whitechapel district of London and although he was often referred to as a "quick-fire comedian" he had numerous songs that were slowish. From 1940 we hear his patriotic version of *Any Old Iron* and *Everywhere you go*, that allow us to hear his vocal timbre clearly. The other songs by him are from the Beka/Lindström stable of

1910-15, a good period for him. *Yorkshire Pudden* is just one of his "food songs". (Actually I do not feel happy with the speed at which this is transferred.) *Down came the blind* (to conclude the funny scene in each verse) employs a tune which Champion made the vehicle for other similar songs (as will be heard in a forthcoming CD taken from "Music Hall" cylinders. I presume that *Never let your braces dangle* warns us to keep our wits about us. It contains the line 'we had to shoot the moon' which means moving house rapidly (often at night) in order to avoid paying large arrears in house-rent! (*H*)*Enery the Eighth* and *Samuel Duff* are amusing nonsense songs, while *When I was licking my stamp* (after Lloyd George had at last managed to get 'social insurance' through Parliament) and *I was holding my coconut* tell us of incidents occurring while he was doing those very things!! Champion's imagery was from the poorer strata of our population.

Down came the blind has a line about a young lady wearing "wedding-grey". I know that my grandmother wore a grey suit for her wedding in 1899. While I've not consulted my social history book on the subject, I know that wearing white as at present is a later fashion for "lower classes" - so Music Hall songs contain social documents - hence a long article I once wrote claiming that Music Hall songs were "urban folk songs". That never went to print for the editor believed only in "rural" folk song! Nor was it returned and my crushed muse has never been inspired to recreate the piece!

If any of these three deserve a whole CD it is George Robey, a master of timing, cynicism, insinuation and good fun. On stage he depicted a wide range of characters. As they entered the Hall his audiences must have wondered which he would present. Some were female. His *Daisy Dillwater* was a District Nurse. *Camille* introduces a play on girls' names. *Such a look* makes us see in our mind's eye his reproving raised eyebrows and *Nerves* is cynical about those mis-applying psychology. *I haven't the slightest idea* illustrates the person who has a very good understanding of the situation without admitting it. *And very nice too* has some nice lines! For instance the rich elderly husband of a very young and attractive lightly-clad bathing beauty asks Robey, "Should I give her a yacht?" - to which the reply is, "No, I should give'er a smack!"

As a lifelong enthusiast of Music Hall I'm glad to see this material re-issued on CD. However, I would have preferred it as three 'acts' having all the songs of one artist together as it would have been on stage, not shuffled together haphazardly. I find it an aural shock to hear the heavy dance band accompaniment to

Florrie Forde following a lighter acoustical sound. If hers were together at the end, the shock would happen only once. In his notes Peter Machin uses much space to tell us that a trumpeter in one of Champion's accompaniments bears some resemblance to one Bix Beiderbecke - but leaves us guessing who this is. Is he seen on stage, screen or TV (which I do not have)? So the comparison is irrelevant and wasted.

Despite my minor grumbles everyone interested in the long-gone Music Hall should buy this CD. You'll find it difficult to hear these great artists any other way. It is **Pearl CD GEMM 9913** with a generous playing time of 74 minutes. (This is available from the **Booklist at £10.50** p&p included. Ed.)

Ernie Bayly

Giuseppe de Luca: a Discography by William Shaman

This book, published by **Symposium Records** (Symposium 1036. Price £7.50 plus postage), is a solid paperback of 150 pages. The stiff binding, made by gluing the edges of the sheets, makes the book difficult to open (and you certainly can't keep it open) and I wonder about the long-term longevity of the binding, particularly as the contents are a mine of information to which frequent reference will be made.

The discography itself is only(!) fifty pages. It has all the information now considered usual, including take numbers published, playing speeds, records resulting from radio broadcasts, records from live concerts, the one original LP and so forth. On top of this, there is, apart from the introduction, over twenty pages of notes to the discography, an admirable description of de Luca's Vitaphone short films (a subject close to my heart), a range of appendices covering coupling numbers, Victor recording chronology and issue dates, live de Luca radio broadcasts not resulting in issued records, LP and CD re-issues and a selective bibliography.

The only niggle I have with this book concerns the question of playing speeds and pitches of some of the records. Playing speeds "are cited where known, but only for commercial recordings where there is some question: the G&Ts, Fonotipias and Victors. In the case of the G&Ts and Fonotipias, keys of performances are given as well, as many of the original recordings were not available to pitch."

In fact, many of the G&Ts and Fonotipias are 'pitched' not 'speeded'. At first sight, if you know one, you know the other. Mr Shaman wrote me an informative letter which opened a Pandora's box of details on how records can be 'pitched' but not necessarily 'speeded', which I can't go into here, though it is to be hoped that if a new edition of the book appears, the author will expand his paragraph on 'pitching' and 'speeding'. Suffice to say that pitching is generally based on the voice sounding 'right'. To keep the voice on key, speeds must be changed in steps, not continuously, so in practice, the speed values are limited. Also, Shaman often had to rely on external sources for his information; thus pitches might have been available, but corresponding speeds not so.

This book is a model of its kind, and like many such good works, there is much valuable information not specifically connected with de Luca.

G. W. Taylor

Greetings from Australia

This cassette plays for about thirty minutes each side, giving 23 selections that are both Australian and historical. Having enjoyed a trip to Australia over Christmas and New Year 1991-92, I can appreciate many of the sentiments expressed. 'Banjo' Paterson wrote many poems and stories set in his native country, numerous of which are set to music. *Waltzing Matilda* was one and we are treated to two different versions by Peter Dawson and Tex Morton. The latter also recites *Clancy of the Overflow*, which many will know from Dawson's sung version. I prefer the recitation for it brings out the meaning better, giving one more time to form mental pictures. *Along the road to Gundagai* and *Where the dog sits on the tucker box* played by Jim Davidson's Dandies - a popular dance band from 1920s to 1940s with amusing vocals aimed to give a glimpse of the 'Outback'. Colin Crane assured us in 1930 that *Australia will be there* recalling their help in 1914-1918 and unfortunately we needed that same help (generously given) again in 1939. During World War II the Aussie soldiers wearing *A Brown Slouched Hat* became a familiar sight (in Southern Britain to my experience). It was recorded by Myree Parker aged 16 (in 1942) and still living happily - so is Joy King who was eight years old when she won the talent competition in 1938 to record the advertising *The Aeroplane Jelly Song* ("I like Aeroplane Jelly").

Coincidentally, during my visit I heard some people recalling Aeroplane Jelly from their youth; so I knew

immediately to what the song referred! The late 1920s and early 1930s were pioneering times for aeronauts and many pilots from many countries achieved great feats. Staggeringly so, when I recall how comfortably I flew from London to Singapore in just 12½ hours, and had I not enjoyed 'stopovers' it would have taken just about the same time from Sydney to Los Angeles. In the summer of 1928, Charles Kingsford Smith (later Sir Charles) and three colleagues endured enormous hardship flying across the Pacific from Oakland to Brisbane via Honolulu and Fiji, a wonderful flight in a small craft. It is incredible how flying-machines have advanced in the last fifty years! The presence of Aussie Forces in Britain was celebrated by Flotsam and Jetsam (McEachern and Hilliam) with their song about a young lady who fell in love with one in *Is e an Aussie, is e, eh?* Len Maurice reminds us of Australia's fine cricketer in *Our Don Bradman* (later Sir Don). Until one visits Sydney, one does not realise how BIG is the Harbour Bridge, and how important to each portion of the city and suburbs on either side. It carries eight lanes of motor traffic, two railway tracks and a safe pedestrian walkway 170 feet above the water-level, affording splendid views. Before its opening on 15th March 1932 a long detour was necessary, or a trip across by one of the many passenger ferries which stopped at midnight. The song *The Bridge we've been waiting for* tells us this. Recorded two months before the opening, Len Maurice, a 'studio singer', told listeners that if they should miss the midnight ferry they would be able to walk across. Incidentally, the ferries are still very busy and frequent and still most convenient for pedestrians and visitors to, say, the Zoo, Manly beach resort, etc.etc.

Of course, a tale of outlaw Ned Kelly is included, sung by composer Billy Blinkhorn, telling how Ned was hung in 1880 at the age of 25. (A well-known Australian record collector confided his opinion that those involved in the 1970 film version should also have been hung!) There was a very successful racehorse Phar Lap who died during a trip to the U.S.A. in 1932. Jack Lumsdaine composed and recorded his *Phar Lap - Farewell to You* commemorating the event, but justifiably it's an ephemeral song. No Australian souvenir-by-recordings could omit Nellie Melba. She sings *Home, Sweet Home* in 1921. 1934 was the Centenary of the founding of Melbourne by John Batman (that having been planned in the Cornwall Hotel still standing in Launceston, Tasmania). For the occasion Clem Williams recorded Jack O'Hagan's (1898-1987) song *Let's take a trip to Melbourne* (to see the prolonged celebrations - 500+ miles if you lived in Sydney or

Adelaide, by slow train or poor road then). Nobody should excuse his/her patriotism when it remains non-belligerent. Two noted poets, Dorothea Mackellar and Dame Mary Gilmore recite their lines, respectively *My Country* - telling of its topographical variety and climate - and *Old Botany Bay* - emphasising the importance of that place and its original hardships - *the country was because of me. Sydney, I love you* praising features in and around that city is played by the 2FC Dance Orchestra in March 1927. It is a foxtrot but would, no doubt, have been better in slower and less regular rhythm. 2FC, operated by Farmer and Company in Pitt Street, Sydney, was one of Australia's first radio stations which began on 5th November 1923. Peter Dawson comes in patriotically with *Song of Australia* and *Advance, Australia Fair*. If you go to Australia it is best to make your visit for Christmas-tide and into the New Year when the weather is at its warmest while the northern hemisphere (especially the British Isles) have dark, cold, miserable days. In 1932 an eight-inch disc was produced giving *Greetings from Australia* to be sent to relatives and friends in 'The Old Country' telling of the climatic differences on 25th December and ending with *Auld Lang Syne*, a recorded curiosity which is NOT a musical highlight performed by what sounds like an unrehearsed group dragged into the studio after an all-night gig. I've left until last another Banjo Paterson story *The Man from Snowy River*. It is fine, telling of the successful retrieval of a prized racing-colt from among a herd of wild mountain ponies by a man on an odd sort of horse, not expected to do so by the experienced riders. It is told by Chips Rafferty (1909-1971) an 'outback character' born in Broken Hill (as was June Bronhill). He was very tall and we've seen his films in Britain, including *Bitter Springs* that also had our Tommy Trinder.

This cassette reflects Australia as it was, but it is enjoyable still quite apart from the history. It was compiled by Peter Burgis, who gave me more information than I found in my encyclopædia, and re-mastered excellently by Rex McClean. As the inlay-card says, *An Australian Product for World Enjoyment*, and this cassette is available from **Kingfisher Cassettes**, P.O. Box 1660, Port Macquarie, NSW 2444, Australia

Ernie Bayly



THE PHONOGRAPH

JOHNSON. They tell me, Sam, that the engagement between yourself and that charming young lady is broken off. How is that?

SAMBO. Oh! that was through the funnygraph --

JOHN. I presume you intended to say the phonograph - that marvellous invention of Mr Edison, which records all sounds committed to it, and can be made to repeat them at will?

SAM. That's it. Well, you know, she was a girl all over sentiment; and what must she do but bother me till I'd hired a funnygraph; so that she could whisper a fond "good night" into it when she went to bed, and then sent it on to me, so that I could have the machine, set it going every night when I laid my head on the pillow, and fall asleep with her loving greeting - from her own mouth, so to speak.

JOHN. That was certainly a very pretty idea.

SAM. So I thought; and my heart went on like beating carpets, when I nipped into bed next night, started the machine, and heard it say in a voice like a cherubim with a sore throat, "Good night! my ownest own ducky diamond! my latest waking thought is of thee!" There! I was that happy and all-overish, that I couldn't sleep a wink - when, suddenly, the funnygraph started making a row for all the world like sawing wood with knots in it; and then it settled down into a good old sturdy go-as-you-please snore in seven different keys, with variations.

JOHN. Good gracious! how do you account for that?

SAM. Oh, easy enough! After saying "Good-night" and the rest of it into the funnygraph, she'd dropped off to sleep, and of course the machine took down her snoring. So next day I go round to her place and say, "I know all! Further concealment is useless! My dream of bliss is o'er - and you can ne'er be mine!" She said I'd been drinking - what did I mean by play-acting like that? So I said "Araminta, I will not betray your unhappy secret - it shall not pass my lips, even to yourself! But you can never become my bride unless you solemnly swear to" - "To what? she shrieked; "To wear a clothes-peg on your nose when you go to sleep," says I; "I can't stand your mouth-organ going all the time you're awake, and your nose-organ going the time you're asleep!"

JOHN. Well, it certainly would have been unpleasant to have a snoring wife.

SAM. Rather! But she drew the clothes-line at the peg - I mean she drew the peg at the clothes-line - hang it! you know what I mean! - and as I couldn't stand the idea of a nose that worked overtime at the top of its voice, I broke it off.

JOHN. What! the nose?

SAM. No, sir! the engagement. And she requested me to return all the things she'd given me.

JOHN. Which of course you did?

SAM. Yes; everything - except the couple of black eyes she gave me when she caught me out with another girl; but I behaved handsomely, even in that, for I offered to give her a couple of new ones in place of them, if she wished it. But she said, "Never mind; that I might keep the two I had in remembrance of happy days gone by." And then, when I turned up my nose at her impudence, she said it didn't suit me like that, and turned it down again - with

the fire-shovel! - which made my blooming counting-house like a lost division in the House of Commons -

JOHN. And why, pray?

SAM. Because the *Noes* had it!

{The above article was first published in *The Mohawk Minstrels' Seventh Book of Dramas, Dialogues and Drolleries* published by Francis, Day and Hunter Ltd. of London around 1890. Thanks to Allen Debus of Chicago for providing the material. Ed}

Forthcoming Meetings in London

London Meetings are held at the National Sound Archive, 29 Exhibition Road, South Kensington, on the third Thursday evening of the month promptly at **6.45pm** (unless stated otherwise). Members' attention is drawn to the London Meetings Notice on page 100 of issue 188 (October 1992).

April 15th

Rick Hardy and Len Watts on *Nobody will notice* when they will play records issued with obvious and not so obvious mistakes in them. Rick will bring his Dictaphone which Len converted to play cylinders. **Can anyone bring one or two cylinders to fit in with the talk's theme?**

May 20th

Feline groovy - Peter Adamson paws his way gingerly through a (tortoise-)shellac menagerie of kittens, domestic moggies, lions, tigers and other *felidae*: music and stories about cats of all sizes, performers with catty names or pretensions; record depicting cats, even recordings of cats. And finally waiving his tale, he emerges with only light surface scratches (no hair cracks, *please!*)

June 17th

Everything you always wanted to know about the National Sound Archive (but was afraid to ask). A tape/slide presentation by Benet Bergonzi, Curator of Artefacts

July 15th

Timothy Massey. Title and subject to be announced.

August 19th

George Woolford in *1904 and Melba*

September 16th

To be announced.

October 21st

John Cowley. Title and subject to be announced.

HELP!

Decca K582/3, issued in mid-June 1931, contain Beethoven's Serenade Op.25, played by Moyse, Darrieux and Pasquier. The discs have matrix numbers SA50 to 53, and were issued in France, as T10002/3.

Where and when was the SA matrix series recorded - perhaps in France or Switzerland? Would anyone who knows the answer to this please write to the Editor.



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